

# PIRATES & PRIVATEERS

**H**RRR YE MATEYS! YE BE OFFICERS ON THE *SEA DRAKE*, a survey vessel under the nominal command of Captain Adamant. Although the *Sea Drake*'s primary mission is exploration and discovery, Captain Adamant holds a letter of marque, entitling him and his crew to capture pirates and enemy vessels, and bring dangerous criminals to justice. Here be dragons!

**Eversea Isles.** A few hundred years ago, sailors from Gildenport (a city-state on the mainland with powerful merchant interests) re-established contact with a massive island chain in the Eversea, about 2,000 miles off the mainland. Although the larger islands are colonized, many of the smaller islands are uncharted. Some are home to free settlements, and others to ancient ruins and monsters.

**Blackjack Bay.** Centrally located in the Eversea Isles, the town of Blackjack Bay is a haven for smugglers, pirates, and ne'er-do-wells, and is considered neutral territory. The Gildenport soldiers stationed up the hill at Fort Blackjack will pay bounties, but lack the manpower to enforce any laws. The largest and cleanest inn and tavern is the Merry Mermaid, but the most popular is the much rougher Chum Bucket. Common goods and ship supplies can be purchased from Pembroke's Provisions. The priestesses at the Temple of the Moon help maintain order in town and can provide healing.

## THE CAPTAIN IS AN NPC

Captain Adamant is the party's patron who assigns them missions. He might receive an urgent message from the admiralty via magic pigeon, promise a favor to a colleague he happened to run into, or recall a rumor about a nearby island. It's up to the PCs to undertake the mission, for which they will be well paid; the good captain is happy to stay in his quarters, dissecting monster specimens.

## CHARACTER CREATION

Level 1; standard array or point-buy for ability scores; average hit points; starting equipment packages; any race or class. You can make up whatever homeland or religion you want!

**Alignment.** Any! BUT: you must be loyal to the crew of the *Sea Drake*, including the other PCs. Don't betray them, take advantage of them, or coerce them.

**Flintlock Weapons.** Pistols and muskets (*DMG* p. 267-268) have been around for a few hundred years but are just now starting to become practical due to true flintlock ignition, breech loading, and paper cartridges. You can't select them as part of a class equipment package due to cost.

**Matchlock Weapons.** Cheaper muzzle-loading matchlock pistols and muskets have the statistics listed in the *DMG*, but reloading one takes an action. They cost 1/10 the listed price, and if your starting gear includes "any martial weapon" then you may select a muzzle-loading matchlock firearm.

## THE SEA DRAKE

The *Sea Drake* is an 80-foot schooner, crewed by 20 sailors and officers, and armed with four cannons. She bears a figurehead of a dragon with wings outstretched, and flies the flag of Gildenport. The *Sea Drake* is about 20 years old, and is said to be cursed with bad luck.

**Captain Adamant.** Captain Edgardian Adamant is a skinny young man, enthusiastic in his duties and with a strong moral compass. Unfortunately, he is largely incompetent, being absent-minded, distractible, and displaying poor judgement.

After the previous crew mostly died in a freak accident involving inadequate food-storage practices and a mislabeled *scroll of insect growth*, Adamant is now seeking brave and qualified officers to make most of the sailing-related decisions for him so that he may focus on his study of the natural world.

**Sailors.** The *Sea Drake* has about a dozen sailors of various races, ages, genders, and experience levels. In general they are **commoners**, but some have the statistics of **bandits** with proficiency in water vehicles. If you wish to have certain crew members have special talents or traits, we'll establish them as Contacts, using the downtime rules from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

We'll use the Loyalty system (*DMG* p. 93) to determine the sailors' behavior. A crew that goes to Loyalty 0 will mutiny or abandon ship.

**The Boatswain.** The most senior sailor is a burly, taciturn half-orc woman named Shautha, but everyone just calls her "the Boatswain" (pronounced "BOH-zun"). She is dutiful and dilligent, but also very superstitious, containing a wealth of misinformation about sea monsters and supernatural dangers. The Boatswain attends officer's meetings and represents the interests and ideas of the sailors.

## OFFICERS

The PCs are the ship's officers.

**First Mate.** Since the captain is a nincompoop, day-to-day running of the ship falls to the First Mate. You direct the crew with a WISDOM (WATER VEHICLES) check.

**Pilot.** You steer the ship, typically by making a STRENGTH (WATER VEHICLES) check.

**Master-at-Arms.** You are responsible for security and discipline, as well as commanding troops during combat actions, by making a CHARISMA (INTIMIDATION) check.

**Navigator.** You plot the ship's course by making an INTELLIGENCE (NAVIGATOR'S TOOLS) check.

**Carpenter.** You repair the ship and maintain it, by making a STRENGTH (CARPENTER'S TOOLS) check.

**Surgeon.** You treat illness and injury, and oversee sanitation and nutrition, by making a WISDOM (MEDICINE) check. Healing magic also helps.

**Entertainer.** Crews at sea need something to keep their spirits up via music, storytelling, or sometimes lyric poetry. You make a CHARISMA (PERFORMANCE) check, or if you play an instrument, a CHARISMA (MUSICAL INSTRUMENT) check.

**Purser.** You are in charge of the ship's finances, inventory, and supplies, as well as any plundered treasure, often calling for an INTELLIGENCE (WATER VEHICLES) check.